



Rural Development • Rural Community Programs • Community Facilities Program

Northern Wisconsin Food Pantry Meets Community’s Needs with the Help of USDA

In the past 10 years, the Rhinelander area in Wisconsin has lost 1,200 high paying jobs. Thus leaving only minimum wage employment opportunities; creating a class of “working poor” and qualifying more than half the school students for free or reduced lunch.

To assist the families who’ve fallen on hard times, the Rhinelander Area Food Pantry (RAFP) works to ensure everyone has access to food, and no family goes hungry.

However, in order to meet the growing needs, the RAFP needed to replace out dated equipment and more room for storage, as the pantry was sharing space in the Nativity of Our Lord Thrift Store.

After many months of fundraising and hard work, the RAFP was able to move to a new 7,200-square-foot facility. The new building features wider aisles for easier shopping, a sitting area, and floor scales for weighing food. The new set up helps make food distribution more efficient.

The move would not have been possible without generous support from the community and two grants.

Wisconsin Public Service gave a \$10,000 grant for the insulation of the new roof, and a USDA Rural Development Community Facility Grant paid for more than half - \$26,000 - of the price for equipment such as shopping carts, a forklift, and two floor scales.

RAFP serves nearly 500 families each month with an annual distribution of 500,000 pounds of food. One program, in particular, the pantry oversees is the ‘Weekend Food for Kids Program’. Partnering with the Rhinelander Area School District, the program provides approximately 200 children with backpacks filled with food; ensuring that children do not go hungry over the weekend when school lunches and breakfasts are not available.

In addition to utilizing government food programs and Feeding America, the nation’s largest food bank; RAFP has partnered with the Rhinelander Area Community Garden to provide locally grown fresh fruits and vegetables.

The new RAFP facility is a testament that Rhinelander is a community that cares about all of its citizens.



RAFP volunteer stocks the shelves of the new Rhinelander Area Food Pantry Facility.

Obligation Amount: \$26,000

Date of Obligation: FY 2014

Congressional District: Duffy, District 7; Senators Johnson & Baldwin

Partners: Wisconsin Public Service, City of Rhinelander, Feeding America

Demographics: City of Rhinelander and surrounding communities, nearly 500 families.

Impact: The assistance received provides capabilities the Rhinelander Area Food Pantry previously did not have, making them better equipped to do what they do best – help those in need.